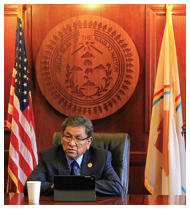
Begaye, Nez issue statement on Navajo fluency referendum

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Now that the referendum on the Navajo fluency requirements for the presidency of the Navajo Nation has been settled, President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez said it is time to move forward and begin the healing process for the Navajo people.

“We appreciate the fact that the people were given the opportunity to vote, even though we were disappointed with the number of people that came out to vote,” President Begaye said. “In the future, we recommend that referendums be voted on during the general election so we don’t spend more money than we need to.”

Vice President Nez said, “We believe that the Navajo people know the importance and the value of the Navajo language as the foundation of our Navajo Nation.”

The administration has said that as the Navajo Nation moves into the future, there is going to be more referendums put before the people to decide on critical issues like the language debate.

“Our stance was to encourage the people to participate in the voting process and we support the voice of the people,” Begaye said.

He said the language must be protected to ensure that it is spoken for centuries to come and that it doesn’t become extinct like it has among some tribes.

“As the Nation advances, now, more than ever, there will be a revitalization of the Navajo

language in our schools, places of work, and most importantly, in our homes," Nez said.

President Begaye and Vice President Nez thank the Navajo people for voting on this important referendum. The fact that both sides from the referendum recognize that the Navajo language is vital to our future is a victory for the Navajo people.

"We appreciate the vote that took place and we're ready to move forward as a nation," Begaye said. "We need to work together, support each other and encourage one another because we are one people, one nation."